

Statement for the Record

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**Before the
United States House of Representatives**

Committee on Homeland Security

**Subcommittee on Emergency Communications, Preparedness and
Response**

Subcommittee on Management, Investigations, and Oversight

United States Chamber of Commerce

**"Leveraging the Private Sector to Strengthen Emergency Preparedness
and Response"**

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Good Morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittees

My name is Barry M. Dinvaut Sr. I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of Dinvaut's Trucking Service. Thank you for inviting me to Washington in order testify before you about FEMA, the Army Corp, and the state of recovery in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

Dinvaut's Trucking Service Inc. has enjoyed servicing businesses in the State of Louisiana for 30 years. Based in New Orleans, DTS has grown from a small trucking company doing general hauling and sugar cane to a premier hauling, demolition, hazardous waste transportation, and construction firm.

For 10 years, DTS inc. has been servicing the major part of the federal sector with the help of the Small Business Administration under the 8A certification program. We have extensive experience working for many parts of the federal government including, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Army Corp of Engineers, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Department of Homeland Security. These jobs include, but are not limited to the Gentilly St. EPA Superfund job, working with the Army Corp on the Algiers levee project, the Violet, LA levee project, the Barataria pumping stations, the Airline/310 levee project, the Williams Blvd. levee embankment, and the Intercoastal levee project.

Since Katrina, I have also done debris hauling, demolition, and white goods removal for the Environmental Chemical Corp.(ECC) who is a contractor for FEMA. This is an ongoing project which supports the recovery of the lower ninth ward and the return of New Orleans citizens to their homes.

Throughout the years of business Dinvaut's Trucking Service has enjoyed the support of many organizations, which include Black Chamber of Commerce, Louisiana Economic Development, LAPAC, City of New Orleans, Natl. Association of Minority Contractors, and SBA. We are also certified and permitted with the following agencies, Interstate Commerce Commission, USDOT - Federal Highway Commission, EPA - superfund, and the Louisiana Dept. of Environmental Quality.

Although Dinvaut's Trucking Service was severely impacted by the events of hurricane Katrina, we resumed operations in less than 2 months after the storm.

Experiences with FEMA

Working with FEMA in the recovery of the city of New Orleans has awarded me with a great deal of knowledge and experience. Compared to when they first arrived to the present FEMA has shown major improvement in the clean up and the recovery of New Orleans. Since the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina FEMA has continued to bring on more companies with valuable real world experience. The standards for companies to which FEMA awards their contracts to have increased substantially since they first arrived in New Orleans. The information available to the public has also greatly increases, both in amount and also in quality. Another improvement by FEMA is the addition of new program scheduling for debris pick in different areas other than the ninth ward. My experiences with FEMA for the most part have been positive ones. The people with whom I interact with at FEMA give me the impression that they are trying their best to make the recovery process go as smoothly as possible.

While FEMA has made many improvements since they have come to New Orleans, there are some things in which they can still improve on. One of the major improvements is to hire more local small business firms from the greater New Orleans area and from southern Louisiana in general. While these small businesses have had success in procuring work for FEMA, it seems that many times that they are qualified companies who are pushed aside for the big out of state companies who know nothing about Louisiana and it's culture and have no stake in the recovery of this city or this state.

I think that the solution towards many of problems that occur with the recovery could be resolved with better communication. There seems to be complications whenever people need to communicate between the federal, state, and local levels. My advice would be to try and reduce some of the red tape, improve communications between all levels of the government, and improve communications between the government and the public.

In closing I would like to thank Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittees for their time today. I would be glad to answer any questions about FEMA, New Orleans, or explain anything I have just said.